CIDAC
R. Pinheiro Chagas, 77, 2.º-E.
1000 Lisboa — Portugal
TL6657-6

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Indonesian army manual permits torture in East Timor

Secret instructions permitting the use of torture have been issued to Indonesian troops operating in East Timor.

An 82-page military manual captured from Indonesian forces by the East Timor resistance movement, Fretilin—and independently authenticated by *AI*—tells soldiers not to photograph prisoners being stripped naked and tortured with electric shocks.

The manual is divided into eight sections, seven of which are marked "secret", including a chapter on interrogation procedures. It says no local witnesses should be present if force is used—"to avoid arousing the antipathy of the people".

According to this manual, whose existence was disclosed by *AI* on 20 July, if such photographs are taken, they should not be allowed to fall into the hands of "irresponsible members of society".

In a letter to President Suharto of Indonesia on 20 July, *AI* pointed out that all governments are bound by international human rights standards that prohibit torture in all circumstances. "Rather than comply with these standards", the letter stated, "these military instructions, while describing the use of force and threats during interrogation as something generally to be avoided, explicitly allow for the possibility of torture and provide guidelines to prevent its exposure."

AI has received persistent reports of torture, including by electric shocks, by Indonesian forces in East Timor since they invaded the territory in December 1975. The organization has also expressed fears for suspected Fretilin supporters who have "disappeared" after detention. Many are believed to have been executed after being tortured under interrogation.

After receiving a copy of the manual, seized by Fretilin fighters in December 1982 and brought to Europe last month, *AI* took steps to establish the document's authenticity; it is satisfied that the manual is genuine.

The organization has now asked President Suharto to issue immediate instructions to all forces under his command prohibiting the torture of prisoners under all circumstances.

AI has received no reply to its letter to President Suharto.

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Reunited ...

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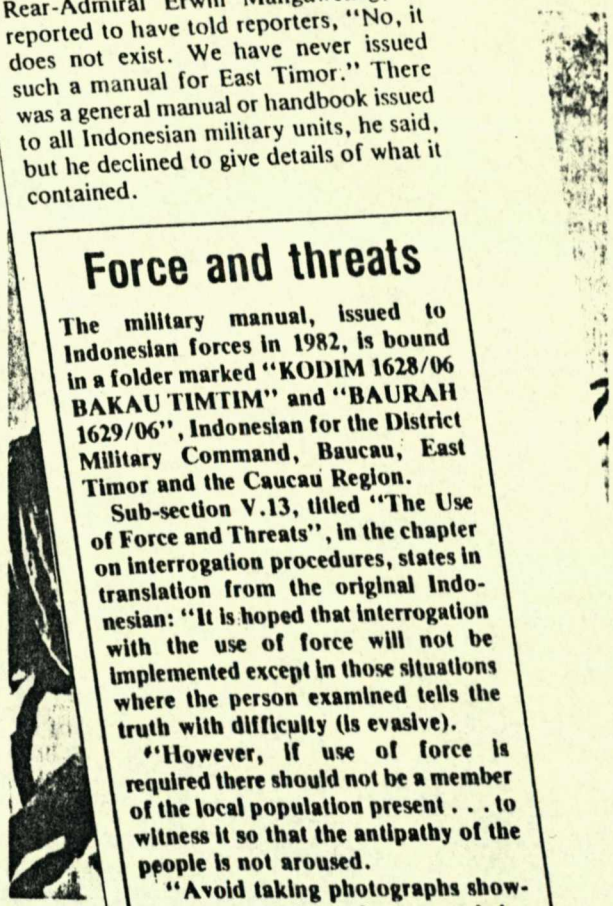
In Jakarta, a government spokesman, Rear-Admiral Erwin Mangaweang, is reported to have told reporters, "No, it does not exist. We have never issued such a manual for East Timor." There was a general manual or handbook issued to all Indonesian military units, he said, but he declined to give details of what it contained.



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Force and threats

The military manual, issued to Indonesian forces in 1982, is bound in a folder marked "KODIM 1628/06 BAKAU TIMTIM" and "BAURAH 1629/06", Indonesian for the District Military Command, Baucau, East Timor and the Caucau Region.

Sub-section V.13, titled "The Use of Force and Threats", in the chapter on interrogation procedures, states in translation from the original Indonesian: "It is hoped that interrogation with the use of force will not be implemented except in those situations where the person examined tells the truth with difficulty (is evasive).

"However, if use of force is required there should not be a member of the local population present . . . to witness it so that the antipathy of the people is not aroused.

"Avoid taking photographs showing torture (taken of someone being given electric shocks, being stripped naked and so on). Remember that such photographs should not be printed freely outside or in Denpasar (the Regional Command Headquarters in Bali) and found by irresponsible members of society."

In addition to reporting the official Indonesian denial, the Jakarta correspondent of the *Far East Economic Review* sought other reactions in the capital. He reported: "An unnamed armed forces source has said that it is possible that the local military command had such a document 'but impossible that it would be taken into the field', an oblique remark which is being taken by some as an indication that there may in fact have been a special counter-insurgency manual specially for East Timor."□